Dublin, 30th of October 1856

Dear Mrs Chapman,

I got up this morning with the intention of writing to you today. My intention was fixed and stimulated by a letter from your sister Caroline to Miss Estlin, which came to hand this afternoon via Bristol, and from which it appears that you are left alone with Madame Laugel while the rest of your party, healthy & invalid, are on their way to Italy. They have our hearty wishes for a comfortable journey and a safe arrival, with the full attainment of all their wishes in the lands of the South.

I had a long letter from your sister C. about 5 weeks ago in which she gave me a commission for a present from her to her young nephew. She wished to give him the best English dictionary and left the selection to me. I have made repeated enquiry among my friends and the conclusion is that the most complete work of the kind, which is altogether English, is the Imperial Dictionary published by Blackie of Glasgow for £4.10. It is now to be had for £4.4 and if you approve of it I will get you one for the trade price £3.3. At the present time I know of a copy neatly half bound which I could secure for you ~~for~~ for £3.5 (the cost to me). But I fear by ~~the~~ the time I ~~hear~~ can hear your decision that it will have been sold. I should take it that whatever be the price of the books to [illegible] you will have it bound to deduct when paying me — for I am

Ms. A.9.2.28.27

31

you that sum the long time advanced by
you at my request to poor Lachambeaudie
of whom I have not heard any thing for ever
so long. I greatly regret not having answered
your letter a very long time — but I first
took some time to ~~find~~ decide on the books
I ought to recommend; and then we had
a long visit from Miss Estlin of nearly four ~~weeks~~
which took up a good deal of my leisure time.
My time is not nearly so much at my own
command as used to be the case when
I had a partner in business. He left me
rather more than a year ago so that I am
obliged to give my constant attention to
my affairs which was previously much
relieved by the presence of another.
Miss Estlin's visit was very unexpected. She
proposed it herself and was most heartily
welcome — and a very great gratification
her presence proved to us here. And she
also said that she greatly enjoyed her time spent
with us. You know her as a hostess — how
easy and how pleasant she is. Well, she
is exactly the same as a guest, which I think
shows still greater virtue. It is so pleasant to
have one with you who lets your guests at ~~[illegible]~~
ease, who lets you know frankly and freely
what she enjoys as well as what she wishes to
avoid. Miss Estlin frankly told us when
she went that she would rather not go, and
she left us very much flattered in consequence.
She is very delicate and although we all
think she looks better and is better for the long
nursing she has had of her father and Parker

Pillsbury during his serious illness, which probably had the effect of drawing her mind away from her own infirmities — still I think she was glad to have her father in good hands and to get away from the monotony of nursing for a time. I think too that we were good people to come to, for our tastes are similar, we live in an easy, informal way and were most heartily glad to have her. Her energy and talent ~~[illegible]~~ found with such physical infirmity, are such as I have never seen in any other person. But her good sense, good temper, kind consideration, large heartedness, and cheerfulness crown her intellectual gifts independently and make her a real jewel. In the letter of today your sister speaks of her strengthening the attachments to the Anti Slavery cause. This I can surely own to — for I am more indebted to it for my zeal to it, for [illegible] comfort together. I cannot ~~them~~ tell you what a benefit the Miss Estlins have been to us — they are so friendly, ~~social~~ & sympathising that if they were our own near relations our intercourse with them could hardly be more intimate. Whilst Miss Estlin was in town they had the great pleasure of constant intercourse with Eliza Wigham of Edinburgh who is on a visit with her sister in Dublin. She is a very sweet minded, unselfish, tender hearted, cordial, earnest friend of the Anti Slavery cause and delights in every thing that promotes it. We have just got together a very good box for the Bazaar along with the usual additional consignment of [illegible] Stationery

We have continued to get satisfactory letters from our elder son who emigrated to Australia last year for the benefit of his health. He has conducted himself with great steadiness and industry and has been constantly employed from a very short time after his arrival. When we last heard from him and for some previous letters he was engaged as a road and drain contractor in the bush 250 miles west of Melbourne, living a very wild life among the savages & whites but much less savage. He did not much relish such uncongenial and often villainous society, and finding that I am hampered for want of assistance in my business he speaks of returning soon to assist me. He will be heartily welcome when he comes.

In the last summer we have had much sickness and death in our circle. My ~~sister~~ brother James has lost his eldest daughter – a fine healthy, bright, beauty girl, who was the light of his eyes. Her illness was slow, protracted and heart rending from the emaciation & disfigurement that attended it. I never knew a more deplorable case of domestic bereavement or the intense suffering it caused at the time to the survivors. About the same time his partner died, the only son of his mother the only brother of his sister, a young husband the father of a child two weeks old, and an excellent young man in all his social relations. This young mans mother ~~was~~ is my aunt, and she

Ms. A.9.2.28.87

Oct 30 '54

poor woman looked to him as the chief support of her old age. My two daughters have both left their college in London, the elder because it seemed time for her to leave school for she is 17; and the younger did not like to go back alone — besides there were plentiful reasons in the prostration of business through the summer, and the comparative expensiveness though real cheapness of these London boarding establishments. Miss Webb being a well read intelligent companion, the girls cannot be much the worse by exchanging the advantages of regular schooling however great for her society. I understand you look forward to an early return to America. I hope you will not forget the [illegible] in London, [illegible] call if in London. I would esteem it a favor and a great pleasure. We are very plain people at home ~~but~~ as well as abroad, but ~~[illegible]~~ try to make you feel at home, I would not make a show of you, and would be greatly pleased to number you among the writers by whose books we have been ~~thoroughly~~ interested and profited. But I would ~~[illegible]~~ conclude this long letter as I [illegible] you the trouble of [illegible] such long crowded explanations [illegible] that only, and with these [illegible] that though I have been dilatory I am by no [illegible] the author [illegible] [illegible] by me. I would mention in this connexion that the excellence of the Imperial Dictionary (which is in 2 vols. large octavo, containing in all about 2300 pages,

Ms. A.9.2.28.27

31.9

treble columns) consists in its completeness. It contains a vast number of technological and scientific words. But I would have thought that the large French & English Dictionary published by Didot, I think edited by Tibbins and some other person, would have been the most useful to a born Frenchman, as containing so much explanation in his own language and therefore so much clearer and intelligible than ~~than~~ in a foreign tongue. However he has a capital teacher always at hand to supply the deficiency of any books he may get. The illustrations which make Johnson's & Richardson's dictionaries so rich, in the copious examples from the best English authors, are not to be found in the Imperial which is a dear dictionary of explanation & which is so copious that it contains just one half more than Craig's another good dictionary of the same kind, which Miss Estlin thinks very highly of and she is a good judge.

Parker Pillsbury has been spending the last month or more at Belfast, with the Neale family, very charming & hospitable people, who esteem him highly, and do all in their power to make him happy & and comfortable. While Uncle Estlin was here he paid him a visit there by the invitation of his hostess and was greatly gratified by her reception and the pleasant, hearty people she met with, so interested in him & in the cause. He is shortly to be with us for some weeks. It is fortunate he has met with so many families where he is made heartily welcome & can feel quite at home — for he is a man of very acute, sensitive feelings, high spirited and with a dash of genius in his composition such as one does not meet with every day. His health is very frail and he needs kind sympathy & tender watching.

I have heard nothing of Miss Martineau lately, not liking to trouble her with needless writing — for I know how earnestly occupied she is & to what excellent purpose

With kindest regards and best wishes to the young couple I am
Yours ever truly & respectfully

Richd D Webb

My wife is quite well. I wish you could see her and know her better than you do.

MS A.9.2.28.27